The Virtual Arts and Life Magazine





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About the Cover: Ervare furnished us with this shot from the installation by Kunst Blue (and the subject of "Gregorovich: A Trip Into the Afterlife") at Amerika Art 2022, a fabulous exhibit featuring 16 renowned virtual artists. It's not easy to get in: just ask the soft blade or the Jellies.



"If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there."

Lewis Carroll

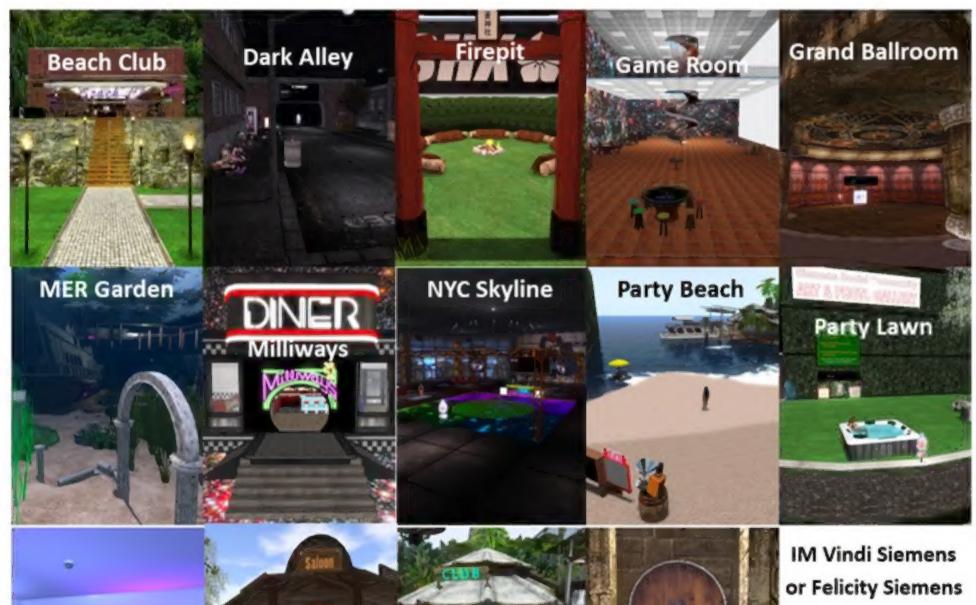




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AMENITIES: Old Castle with hidden rooms and hang gliders; Art Gallery; Gardens overlooking the sea; Harbor open to protected ocean with boat docking and sailboat rezzers; Sunken Shipwreck and undersea area; Homes and Skyboxes; and Fourteen Unique Party Places equipped for Live DJ performances—shown below.

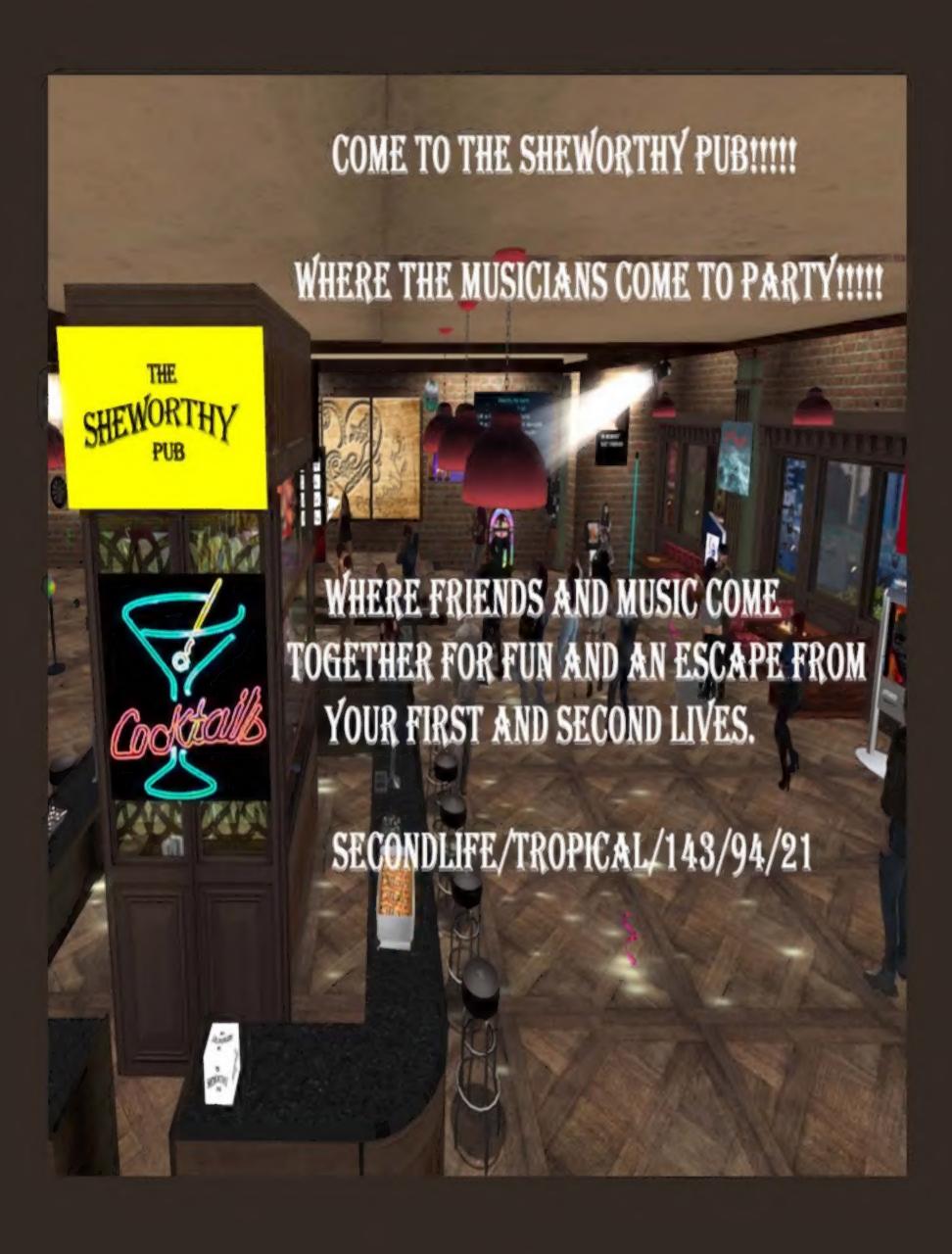


Private Place

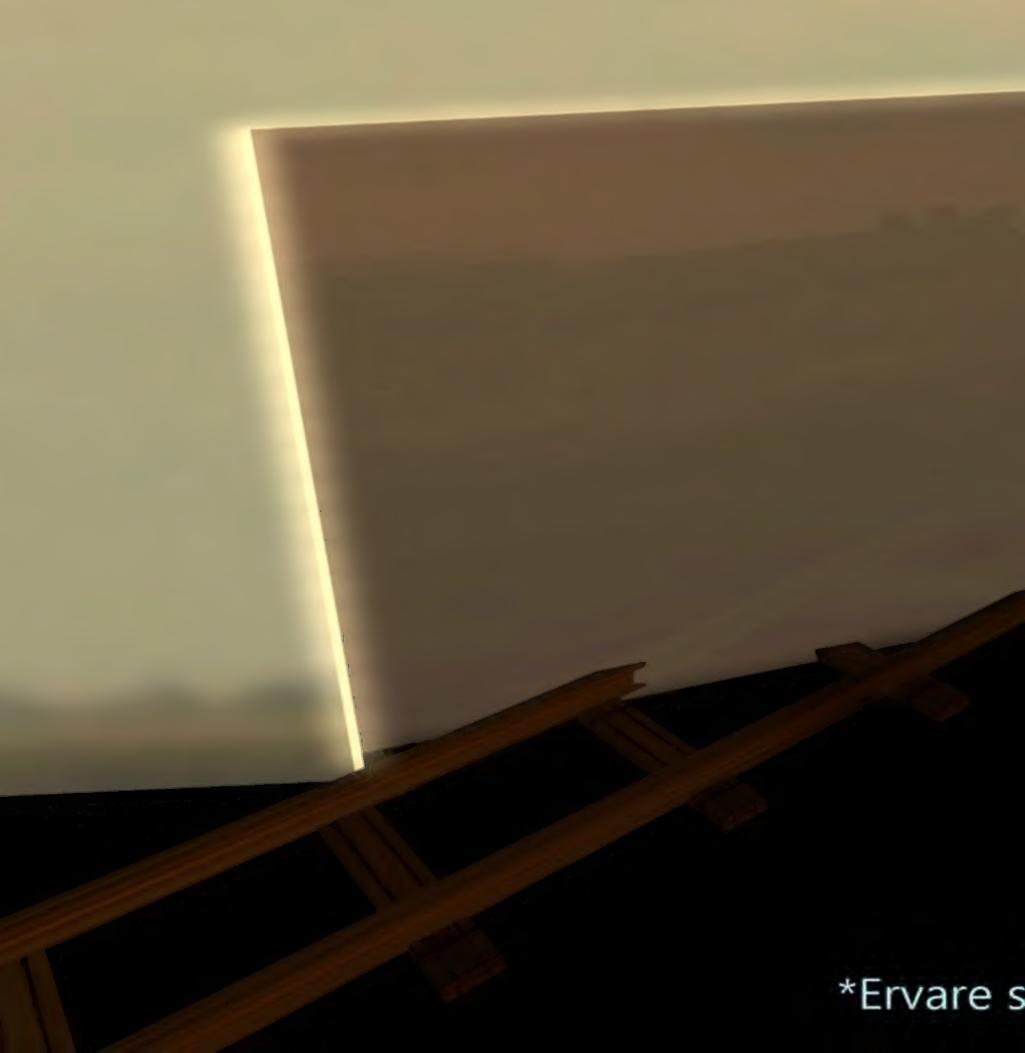
for a guided tour.

peakeasy Club

Membership is free to kind, accepting, tolerant people.



Gregorovich: A Trip An Inst



o Into the Afterlife allation by Kunst Blue



By Ervare*

tands in Afrikaans for "the old man knowing"

You are immortal.

For a reason. Do you know the reason? Don't think too long about this question. The answer shall reach you before you start thinking. Listen to Gregorovich using this link: https://youtu.be/qKpMdZUG9k0

"My head is in my hands again. My heart it beats inside my friends. It's you, you all who get me through. So much I know and wish I knew."

Gregorovich stands for a whisper in the night, stands for space, stands for Art, for Blue, for Red, but when it comes to the trip into the afterlife, Gregorovich stands for the mind of the Wallfish, a smuggler ship in the epic saga To Sleep in a Sea of Stars, written by Christopher Paolini. In the song, Gregorovich is using the voices of Todd Herfindal and Jennifer Hale. Many gamers know Jennifer Hale. Halo, World of Warcraft, Overwatch, Baldur's Gate, Mass Effect, Metroid Prime, Metal Gear Solid, Spider Man, BioShock Infinite, and Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic - just to name a few where she has given her voice. Don't confused with get Gregorovitch. He was a famous wandmaker. In Harry Potter, he is described as having "pure, white hair and a thick bushy beard." That Gregorovitch, the wandmaker, could be a part of Gregorovich's mind makes

it worth giving this story his name.

But a story has to start at the beginning, right?

I met Gregorovich when he was visiting the upcoming art installation



Back to The Salt Mines, created by Kunst Blue. I first wondered how Gregorovich could enter the sandbox for Amerika, a parcel that is not open to the public. I said to him, "You must be in the Amerika Builder's group to get access." I had not finished my sentence when I see him creating a hull

around the installation, naming it Wallfish. I was checking if he was on the land estate list and he was not. He said, "I am born as Kunst" and he was laughing like a fish. I said, "Was it the soft blade or the Jellies, who let you in?" He said, "It was the Phantom of



the Opera." And he showed me the unbroken Staff of Blue. I said, "Nova Energium." It makes sense when you speak to a ship persona that you show knowledge beyond the mainstream. I could have said "GOD 9000." Then it would become a different story, but I like to stay close to the quest of the

Wallfish. Readers of The Sand Bible know when it once came to my belief in an afterlife that I was questioned by the AI of the Vatican, the OMIVAC the Supreme 9000. At Sacred Congregation of the Holy which is the modernized name for the Holy Inquisition, I used the method of a paradoxical intervention and I felt it was time to do so again, to use reverse psychology. This technique works in a Canonization as well as in AI therapy and is highly recommended when it comes to the afterlife. This said, it was no surprise to me that by mentioning name of the monastery, the Gregorovich changed his shape and skin. I saw him as a reborn Jalal Sunyaev-Zel'dovich, the founder of the church of the entropists who call themselves the Questants.

The common description of the Questants is that they act as a twin pair: a monk and a nun. "The skin of this hive mind-linked duo was chalk white and laced with silver wires and gleaming blue tattoos, which formed circuit-like patterns that concealed mysterious nanotech. Their gradient robes displayed the stylized rising phoenix logo of their order."

From To Sleep in a Sea of Stars.

His answer, that it is was the Phantom of the Opera who let him in, brings you closer to the fact that you are immortal. You catch for a moment that there is a

reality beyond the mortality around you. That is the intention of Kunst, which is the German word for Art and in specific of Kunst Blue who brings the visitors of Amerika in a timeless time capsule back to their previous life and to the life's work of well-known artists. Kunst Blue is real. You see his passport, issued by NSK, the stateless state of art, placed on a table. You may jump on a sit ball, which forces you into the Vitruvian pose and particles of blue light drift around you up to the sky. You become a Vitruvian persona. This pose is genderless. The origin goes back to the year 1490, where the Roman architect Vitruvius puts in his treatise De Architectura the human body in two superimposed positions with his arms and legs apart and inscribed in a circle and square. The visualization made by Leonardo da Vinci in a most famous drawing represents da Vinci's concept of the human body proportions. ideal Standing in the Vitruvian pose, you are invited to look at the installation from outside. You look at the Wallfish, the hull of Gregorovich, the brain of a ship's persona. This installation goes the known beyond the limits of simulator; it becomes a Weltenmaschine [world simulator]. Is the universe itself computing to create what is meant to be inside the tower for the Afterlife? The inventor of the computer, Konrad Zuse, published in Rechnender Raum [Computing Universe] in 1969, that the universe is a computer. Was he wrong and the universe is a brain? Can it be that you look inside the green matrix of Thoth Jantzen and Jo Ellsmere? Is Kunst right now attempting to power up the God machine, that HAL 9000 says is able to bend space and time? How can



Gregorovich give a picture of the matrix, the core of Thoth and Jo where robotic arm modules are holding a brain?

The distance between both installations is over 7,000 meters. This means light

years in terms of the known universe where we act inside. Even the highest render settings, the strongest gaming PCs can't bring them both into view. The maximum render distance is 1,024 meters. Some time is needed to think about traveling faster than light. How shall a human mind handle that the

"In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art." - Sol LeWitt

> I offer you a break of eight minutes. Listen to The Mask by Armin van Martin. and Sam Buren https://youtu.be/FD0Wxz4giVU

By hearing the voices, you might feel that there must be Arrakis, the desert planet in the Canopus star system, around. How else could the needed amount of the spice melange be harvested such a ride into deep space takes?

You are invited to click on the creator's box that is placed on the table of Back to The Salt Mines. There you find more information about the installation that Kunst Blue made for the Afterlife, the theme of Amerika Art 2022.

That Kunst Blue calls for Gregorovich to encapsulate this momentum of history is a trick for the mind. You will believe that a higher intelligence must be behind when a simulation turns out to have a higher quality than the reality we know. You will stand in front of a



viewer can't show things that Kunst Blue can bring close on a mouse click? beyond technology. Kunst goes Nevertheless, the installation minimal. It follows the concepts of Sol LeWitt.

picture of a photo of a world and then you will enter it in the ways the Pharaohs made it 4,000 years ago. The world will be no longer a lame photo, it will be reality, a reality you will walk inside of, a reality you will touch. Gregorovich can change his genome; I saw it when he changed shape and skin, and sang like Tarja Turunen. But it will not be the End of an Era; it will be the beginning of a new quality of life, a life in the simulator, a life in the engine eternal.

Look at the faces of the mortals attending the show in the Hartwall Arena in Helsinki when an era was about to end. You will feel that Gregorovich is right, that the *Phantom of the Opera* fits to a beginning, fits to a new dawn in immersive art.

https://youtu.be/tL25rbnvM4o

In sleep he sang to me
In dreams he came
That voice which calls to me
And speaks my name
And do I dream again?
For now I find
The Phantom of the Opera is there
Inside my mind

When the *Phantom of the Opera* reaches your mind you literally feel the immortality behind the voices. The Phantom gets real.

AM Radio

Have you ever heard of AM Radio? Maybe you are right now laughing and say, "I know well the times when I listened to radio on air. It was long ago, now all is digital." That might



have been the reason that Jeff Berg created an avatar with this name in Second Life in 2006. It was at the time IBM, Reuters, CBS, Dell, Armani, American Apparel, just to name a few, were promoting the virtual world of Second Life and Jeff Berg worked at IBM. Now game engines like Unity or

Godot have taken over and bring immersive technologies to billions of users. Second Life runs still after 20 years. AM Radio left in 2011. Before he left, he exported the creations he made over the years and put them under a Creative Commons License.



The best known piece of AM Radio is *The Far Away*, which became part of a museal project, the Vulcanicus conservation. From there Kunst Blue brought it to Amerika Art.

The Far Away

The New York Times Magazine gives AM Radio credit in an article *Portrait* of an Artist as an Avatar, published on March 5, 2009, written by Sara Corbett:

"AM Radio's most-visited work is called The Far Away. From a distance, like an accomplished looks a Wyeth-like landscape painting, rendering of a farmer's wheat field in late-day light, with tall dun-colored grass, a rickety-looking windmill and an out-of-place locomotive engine seeming to rust away at its center. But really it is art that requires exploration. One day I let my avatar go wandering through the waist-high wheat, past unseen chirping crickets and the windmill, which turned lazily in the breeze. Sitting in the grass on one side of the field there was an incongruous dining-room table and towering china cabinet. And upon closer look, on the table was a violin, a bowl of grapes and an artist's sketchbook opened to a page showing a skilled pencil drawing of a woman. As I took in each new facet, some part of my real-world foreground seemed to evaporate, like the smudge on my computer screen and the coffee cup next to it and the car alarm blaring from the street below. The person behind AM Radio told me, when I called him on the phone, that in real

life he carries around a traditional sketchbook where he does watercolors and pencil drawings, but that it is not half as rewarding as building a beautifully textured virtual scene and opening it to the avatar masses - even when he sometimes finds them in flagrante delicto next to his steam engine.

"With something like *The Far Away*, you can invite your friends to go there with you. There was a couple who met on the wheat fields and ended up getting married in real life," he said. "No painting sitting in my sketchbook inside my backpack could have done that. They say we are entering an era of social computing, and here is the work of art being social itself."

 New York Times Magazine, republished by Stanford University at https://vhil.stanford.edu/mm/2009/nytportrait.pdf

Bettina Tizzy, a long-time resident in Second Life, is looking back at the moment when she met AM Radio first. From her blog, *Not Possible in Real Life* in April, 2009:

"It seems like forever ago; it seems like only yesterday. Matthew Kiddomen, then a member of our working group (NPIRL) and someone who left the grid for good soon after, sent me an IM some 20 months ago inviting me to come at once. "You

must see this. It's incredible," he said. It was up in the sky above the IBM sandbox... a wheat field, an old rusty train, a table set with an odd assortment of objects including a violin, some grapes, and a sketch book. Also a quaint garage, an old-fashioned gasoline pump, and a shadowbox recreation of Jacques-Louis David's painting, *The Death of Marat*. There, too, was the creator of all this, a rather surprised but nevertheless congenial and very tall gentleman by the name of AM Radio, sporting a long black coat and top hat."

Amerika Art

The art show focusing on the Afterlife happens in Amerika World, opening at the end of May 2022. This type of a world simulator has an advantage. It is based on software that was developed by Berkeley UCI. Phil Rosedale used it as a code base when he created Second Life in 2002. Amerika World is an opensimulator grid and works quite similarly to Second Life, but has a lot of advantages for the arts, as it is not commercial and allows third-party enhancements to run. And the best: you can deal with immortality; you can conserve the art that was created over time.

It is not blasphemy when Kunst takes over and says that everyone can question if Jesus was rising after the



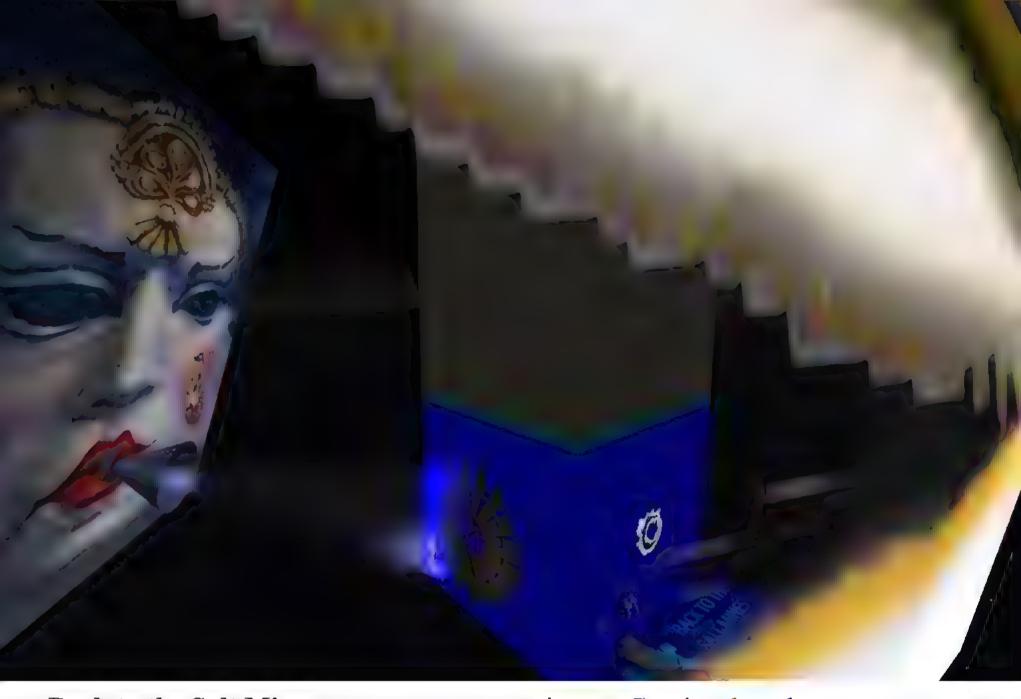
third day and now you can get proof of it.

"Debug the move up script, look at the timer, see the smoothness of the drift. Look up. Slowly he rises in a cloud of blue particles. Now Jesus accelerates and heads up beyond the limit of 5,000 meters, now he reached 8,000. That's a sheer impossibility in the known worlds. Now the movement gets slower. Jesus has reached *The Far Away*."

Everyone can become a son or a daughter of God. Kunst Blue breaks the known height limit in Second Life down, where the maximum is 5,066 meters. The known world is expanding for an Avatar, for the you in you. Some very rich people on earth believe that there are no limits for technology when

looking to the fields of computing and bio engineering. Dmitry Itskov, the founder of the 2045 Initiative, is one of them. His foundation, directed by the futurist Philippe Dutch Nedervelde, states on its website, as the main goal, "to create technologies enabling the transfer of an individual's personality to a more advanced nonbiological carrier, and extending life, including to the point of immortality. We devote particular attention to enabling the fullest possible dialogue between the world's major spiritual traditions, science and society."

Kunst Blue says God created Jesus as a copy and downloaded him to Earth. All we have to do now is to upload the former downloaded one and we have proof that religion is reality.



Back to the Salt Mines

When you reach the installation, you see the Wallfish, a giant hull made of spheres. The hull becomes two transparent and you are inside. The transport system is a simple chair made in old prim-technology. When you stand up, the world has already started to turn upside down. It needs no command for this. You don't have to type, you don't have to click. All it needs if for your thoughts to be on Kunst. Kunst Blue reads your brain waves. In the moment you come closer the installation, the tower is beginning to fall, it rotates and anchors, so a gap opens and you can enter, but the tower does not break into

pieces. Gravity has been overcome, physics is no longer bound by nature. Two wheels, one extracted from the windmill and the other from the train of AM Radio, master the rotation under the command of the God of the Winds. When standing up from the transport chair, a row of sarcophagi is waiting. You may place yourself in an empty one and the transition begins. The magic happens, the sarcophagi bring you inside The Far Away. You slowly drift into a display of the Afterlife, a world that honours our ancestors, a world made in prims. Prims stands for primitives and means boxes and spheres and other basic construction elements. There we find elements The Far the of

Away arranged, fitting to the available space.

Phil Linden

The installation is also a memento to the origins of the first avatars and bridges to the future. There is Phil Linden, called "the Noob," made in prims and sculpts and there is Phil Linden made in mesh. Both are connected via a twisted red band they hold in hand. Both don't see each other, there is a wall between them, so the red band, formed as a lemniscate, connects old and new technology in a way that Phil and Phil do not notice. The mesh Phil holds a blue mesh rose that was once made of prims.

The Artists

In total, 16 artists took the challenge to create pieces of art that will be kept for eternity. Amerika Art reaches out to the past and questions the view of life over time. By pointing back to the Pharaohs and reaching out at the same time to the future, the 2022 Biennale edition opens a door to the first Afterlife Dev Conference in 2037.

Gregorovich could create a copy of you in no time and you would stand for eternity next to your work. The term "your work" fits well. When Phil Linden (aka Philip Rosedale) created the first immersive avatar-based world where a user, where everyone, could

You slowly drift into a display of the Afterlife, a world that honours our ancestors, a world made in prims.

The Far Away has become immortal. Everything is saved, even the Engine Eternal as Kunst Blue calls the train of AM Radio, a linkset having 323 prims works without producing a link error for too many prims.

create things and be creative via an alter-ego, the term "User created Reality" was set in place. Now, 20 years later, the technology advanced and the term reaches beyond the early vision. Everyone could follow your path, the traces you leave with ease. You could get conserved together with

your work in prim and in mesh like the High Priest Wahtye in the Saqqara necropolis over 4,000 years ago in stone. The arrangements of all lives and their final upload could become part of the cultural heritage of mankind, could become Presence. But this vision has to wait, nevertheless it will come. In 1981, James K. Morrow, the author of *Towing Jehovah*, wrote:

from Bill Gates.

Dawn Blue

Immortality needs a different dawn. Things can't end the way they started. You feel in a good movie that the illusion will not hold, but you don't accept the fate of the actors. "This can't be all," you say. Indeed, there is

hope for a better dawn, even in From Dusk Till Dawn, right? You laugh, you cry. I don't know. I send you a word you may use as a closing for the installation Kunst Blue presents us in Amerika Art, who is in fact myself. It is "Madrugada."

What's on Your Mind
— stolen from
Madrugada.

Madrugada is
Portuguese and Spanish and means
dawn blue. At least this is what
Gregorovich tells me. Can we be sure
of this? Listen to the song and find the

"Sozyo made 4-D equipment. The image had height, width, depth and a fourth D that eluded precise definition. It was called Presence. Somehow, you felt that the subject was there in the room with you. You could seemingly walk up to it, savor its fragrance, finger its texture, rub a few eons' grime off its contours."

Immortality at Your Fingertips - stolen

https://youtu.be/7WFk23_6yos

answer.

 \cdot r — e — z \cdot

TERPSICORPS ARTWERKS







Stand by me during this turmoil of today.

United, we bond together, a devoted togetherness.

Division eliminates a needed completeness

Cracks of debris scattering a desired dream.

Bring back, pull closer, fond moments of yesterday.

Strengthening what diminished in evil endeavors.

Savor, again, the truthful joys of standard living

Challenges faced in honest respectful integrity.

Instill the others to gather with worthy true purpose.

Faithful to the quest of kindness and thoughtful sharing.

Conflict brings only wounds of anguished sad result.

Compromise gains knowledge and shared wisdoms.

Stand by me ... as I asked you, this disruptive day.

Undemanding, I plead for the companionship of you.

strong with relationship ... energetic in enthusiasm.

we will lead prosperity and equality

in valued needed directions.

Just....stand by me.





A Blues Tale:
Chapter Four
Austin SXSW

Annie Mesmeriser

o now the project I was so about excited up managing David Brown, premier blues guitarist, was devolving into the tedium of running a business. We needed income, we needed promotion, we needed product. But I also needed to return a phone call to a local promoter in Austin. Before we lost Doc, he had given my name and number to this guy in case we needed help. He turned out to be a bit of a trip as a person, a professional schmoozer, and it was apparent he wanted to take over the entire project. We agreed to meet in Austin and he would set up a gig for David to play on 6th Street during the all-important SXSW festival, with the promoter providing a rhythm section. Another friend of David's, Mike Warner, who could match David's power leads on keyboards, was invited to join us. He not only agreed, he purchased a keytar in order to play side-by-side with David. We had nothing to lose and everything to gain, and maybe we would get the promotion help we sorely needed.

We arrived in Austin, got settled in, and went over to meet the promoter at his house, which was also his office. We had barely gotten there when David was handed an expensive model Stratocaster and this home rig seemed to mirror every toy a guitarist would ever want to play with. The constant

drone of his sales pitch was wearing thin with me, but I decided to play this out with some faked enthusiasm. From that point forward, the entire evening belonged to the promoter and I was content to take a back seat and enjoy the ride.

I arrived at the 311 Club on 6th Street a bit early. I knew when to expect David, and I would be out front when he got there. The street was already crowded from the festival when I saw the black limo pull up in front of the club. I have to admit, this was turning out to be quite a show. The band, Warner on his Hammond, the bass player who was also the club owner, and the drummer was an well-known old Austin drummer called Frosty ... were all on stage and starting to play. Meanwhile, David was listening to a walkie-talkie of the stream from the stage, and started playing the leads while still in the back seat of the limo, thanks to a wi-fi amp hook-up. So, you could hear David play, but he wasn't on stage, so people were looking around to see where the leads were coming from. Then David steps out of the limo in front of the club, again wearing his white ribbon shirt outfit with his Zuzu Bolin shoes, and he's playing in the street! After walking through the front door, immediately flipped his guitar behind his head and was now walking through the crowd playing. Whenever he saw a

cute lady, he would turn around and shove the guitar at her and play a hot riff, inches from her face. As he approached the high-rise stage, he started pulling out all his stupid-guitartricks.... one time using a mic stand to bow his guitar while playing, another time using the edge of the stage in a similar maneuver, even striking a chord and laying the guitar down on the floor, it looking alive as he held it by the whammy bar and shook it up and down, bending the chord into all shapes. And of course, he played with his teeth. Most guitarists like to fake that trick, but David, like his hero Jimi, really used his teeth! Warner served as the perfect foil for David, as they could

acts I had ever seen him involved in. Nights like this made it all worthwhile.

What wasn't so great about that night was the promoter, who stayed in my ear most of the night. At one point, he dragged me out of the club and down to a fairly quiet street corner to talk. Doc, the one person I respected, trusted, and listened to with reverence, was now being trashed by this promoter who was supposed to be his friend. Once again, I did not see any help he could bring to bear, and I was in no mood to hear anything about Doc from a huckster. I knew his game, he wanted to take over management of David, and frankly, I was tempted to

Warner served as the perfect foil for David, as they could "cut heads" during a song ... Dave would play a hot lick, then look at Mike, who would play it back on his keytar ...

"cut heads" during a song ... Dave would play a hot lick, then look at Mike, who would play it back on his keytar, even being able to bend the notes with an electronic pad, then add his own lick and fire it back to Dave. In all my time with David Brown, this was one of the wildest, most exciting

let him. But I put him off in another way, telling him that I would have to discuss his proposition with my partner, Doc. He backed up. I think he heard me! I later told David what I said and he agreed with me, that he still trusted Doc and wanted his involvement, whenever, or if ever that



would be possible again. Ultimately, we had a great time in Austin, but for us, it was a vacation, some more lessons, and it was time to get back to business.

So now it was time to deal with Yogi, the Kiowa Indian who wanted to take David to a blues fest in Budapest to be in his band. He had arranged a gig at a pow-wow in Oklahoma in order for David to meet and play with Yogi's group. The gig wasn't as bad as the night in Austin, but it definitely had some issues. At the very least, they had a drummer who could play a shuffle.

Dave wore one of his ribbon shirts, a bone choker, and with his eagle feather flying around the neck of his Strat, he was the image of a Native American blues guitarist. In spite of all of Yogi's Indian promotions, his outfit of choice was that of a cowboy, complete with vest and ten-gallon hat. I poked David and asked if they planned on playing YMCA 'cuz they sure had the looks for it! I remember getting David's best "Indian look" back, that look that says," ... you don't even want to know what I'm thinking!" Going to Budapest didn't worry me at all. I was expecting that David or I would be approached

by someone wanting to talk and Dave wanted me to do all his talking. But by now, all of that was academic. I had no CD to sell or show, so for me, the entire trip would have been worthless, not to mention I would have had to quit my job, the same one that had been paying for all this. When I did my planning, the 1000 CDs would have sold for \$20,000 minus the ones I planned to give away. With that influx of cash, I was prepared to quit my job and become a full-time manager. But with no CD, no band, no gigs, and David heading for Hungary, I felt like I had nowhere to go but out. I gave my condolences to David, wished him luck, and sent him off to Budapest. David was now upset, thinking I had abandoned him, while I was thinking, he had abandoned me.

After my wild ride in the world of blues, I felt defeated, but it still brings a wistful smile to my face. For the low cost of under \$4000, I had ridden the blues train, meeting and hanging out with an array of blues greats in the Dallas area, some having since hit the big-time, or at least for blues players. I got to play Manager! While the project was active, David got in the habit of, anytime someone would ask him to play, he would send them to me to talk to. I became the portal through which people would talk to David, to the point where they would come to me first. I developed close relationships

with the whole blues scene in Dallas, which was extensive. But in the end, I came to understand the blues, and I remembered the T-shirt which read, "Blues is just a good man feeling bad."

Now, I have nothing. The CD was lost. David moved to California and life went on. I often think about "things that might have been" in spite of the musical warning. What I would say now about the Blues is, I wouldn't take a million dollars for all my memories and I wouldn't give a plug nickel to do it all over again.



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Rose Dro IN HEAVEN

She, no angel, neither much devil, kneels, lower, stubborn, retaining water, and deeply held safe word.

Party person in wings and ferns full fur and feather festooned beast and prey poised poisoned.

Hardly worn and and old soul in a adopted early ar

Worked hard, sti danced, prancing on film festival flo



p Rust AND HELL

put away wet, young universe id experienced. Say it! Say it? Say, say, you can, to last a world's savage suffering finally pushed by edge's bitten end.

ll hardly done, g, pressed prone oor, still all alone.







"You're not supposed to be here, Captain Washington."

"Grace ... that is your name, isn't it? I'm not here on official business, but you probably already knew that." A confident smirk appeared on Greg Washington's face as he approached Grace's chair in the corner nook. Morning sunlight played on the white surface of the mid-Modern breakfast table, the blinds making rows of shadows. In the time it took Grace to reply, she had already run through programming million several calculations. She was neither fearful Captain's by confused the appearance.

Greg took a few steps closer before Grace shot him a stern glance and said in a steady, almost hushed voice, "Captain Washington, by my count, you have already broken seven regulations, and two operational directives, but you probably already knew that."

"Jimmy always did have an eye for beauty. Just look at you. Passing Turing Two. I thought passing Turing One was a big deal, but I had to see this for myself. Turing Two is a whole new ball game. Being able to look and behave in a manner indistinguishable from a living, breathing human, well I'd have never thought it possible until right now."

"What do you want, Captain?"

"Now, with all your complicated social programming and such, do you need to be so curt and formal? I'd have thought Jimmy would have made you...well...friendlier."

"Jimmy didn't make me, and I'm not being unfriendly. I'm just getting to the point, I think you'd say."

Greg steadily approached Grace, closing the distance in three steps. He gently took her hand in his and examined it with fascination. His skin tone was light for an African-American, but contrasted with Grace's pale Nordic skin. "It's warm, your hand."

Graced fixed her eyes on the Captain and noticed something that took her completely by surprise: her heart rate was steadily increasing. "For a myriad of technical reasons, my hands are programmed slightly warmer than normal bodily temperature. The differential offset in each tactile register couldn't be reconciled with the Fischer Constant, so....." Captain Washington took his and finger pressed it against Grace's lips, stopping her mid-sentence. "I love when you talk dirty."

When Grace opened her mouth to respond, Greg slid his finger inside.

"You don't need to talk anymore, Grace. I know you're very smart. No need to impress me." He stroked her fingertip. tongue with his "Remarkable. Never in my wildest have would dreams Ι something this realistic was possible. You're a very exciting AI, Grace. I wonder if you'd show me what all you can do with this tongue of yours."

* * * * *

"My God! I can't believe it, sir. I'm numb. This isn't the way I wanted to win this competition, by one person dropping out and the other dropping dead from some undetected heart murmur. I didn't want to back in. I wanted to win outright. I feel terrible for Washington's wife. He had a little boy, too. It's just tragic."

appears he may have died in his sleep. Helluva way for a soldier to go out - in his sleep. He'd have much rather died in a firefight or, with all due respect, Captain, on Mars. And let me tell you one other thing, soldier. You did win. At this point, nothing else means crap. You're going to Mars, Jimmy. You're going to goddam Mars, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18." Pleased with his Biblical allusion, General Tallmadge pushed his chair back, stood and extended his hand to Jimmy. "Congratulations, Captain. Listen to me a minute. I know a little something about this. Washington was a good man. He and Reynolds were both damn good candidates. Reynolds couldn't take the heat and Washington's heart just gave out. Looks like some damn congenital defect. The autopsy will fill

Why in hell we're sending robots up there with you is beyong me. I'd want a Marine in my foxhole.

"Where did they find Captain Washington, sir?"

"Jimmy, I don't want to get into the details of that. He was in bed. It

in the details on Washington, but that's all a sideshow now. You've got to put this out of your mind and get prepared, mentally and physically. The ship's been ready for months. The crew, and I

use that term loosely, is ready. Why in hell we're sending robots up there with you is beyond me. I'd want a Marine in my foxhole. I will say, though, once the public caught sight of your AI, a lot of people made some pretty desperate efforts to trade places with you. Amazing what a skirt does to some men. What do you call her again?"

"Grace, sir."

"Well, there but for the Grace of God....you know what I'm saying soldier? Now get outta here and go make your country proud."

Jimmy saluted the General and smartly turned 180 and strode purposefully to the mahogany door, musing to himself, "Grace of God. She'll like her new nickname."

* * * * *

"You've got 28 whole days to get your shit together, Jimmy," shouted a drunken pilot from the bar. "Mind if I take your AI for a spin before you go? You know, put her through her paces one last time." Jimmy shouted back, "Your next spin will be around the toilet in a few minutes, if you even make it there," but the pilot's head had already hit the bar.

The roar of the Iron Horse was louder than usual. Jimmy half expected a somber tone with Washington's death, but no one was having it. They were either celebrating Jimmy's imminent adventure, or they simply wanted to forget the awful news of the week. Either way, life goes on.

Someone ruffled Jimmy's hair from behind and he spun around. "Hey! Who gave you shore leave, sailor?," Jimmy said with a lisp. Amid the cacophony, one of his oldest friends, Blake, had surprised him. "Damn! Look at you! Great to see ya, Blake. Thanks for comin' all this way. I was going to be home in a few days. You should a just waited."

"Some things can't wait, Jimmy. I wanted to be here tonight before all the hoopla died down. I wanted to share this moment with you. You the man, Jimmy....you definitely the man now.

"I still can't believe it. Where is Reynolds anyway? I'd like to talk to him."

"I heard he's halfway to El Paso by now. I don't think he wanted to show his face. Can't blame him. Damned embarrassing to drop out like that. From what I heard, he was a tough guy." Blake dragged a chair over to the table.

"Something doesn't feel right, Blake. It's all too pat. As if the way is being cleared for me to go on this mission. Like it was always me and the competition was a charade. Just feels weird is all, like a dream."

"It's weird, alright. I grant you that. But you've trained for it, you've earned it, and now you're going. I got your notes on family business. Consider that taken care of. Don't need to give it a second thought."

"There's only one person on this earth I'd trust with my kids, Blake. You know that."

Jimmy took Blake over to the bar to buy him a drink. "Dewers up. Make that two." Jimmy had to lean into his friend to have any prayer of hearing him. "How're Molly and the kids? Jason must be 6 feet tall now."

"They're all good. I'm blessed with good health, good friends, and good whiskey."

"Blake, come with me. I want you to meet some of my friends." Jimmy grabbed Blake's arm and wove his way through the crowd, with an occasional arm reaching out just to touch Jimmy. When they got back to the table, a raucous game of beer pong was underway. Jimmy set his drink down and noticed a folded piece of paper near his coaster. He picked it up, thinking it was likely some admirer's

phone number, but stopped cold when he read the note. Jimmy started shaking noticeably.

He read it twice to make sure he wasn't confused and then desperately scanned the crowd around him. In the dim light, he could make out the words typed in all caps: "RACHEL'S DEATH WAS NOT AN ACCIDENT."

* * * * *

"Not here," Graced breathed into Greg's ear. "Take me back to your apartment, and I'll show you. Too many nosey sensors here. You want me relaxed, don't you?"

Greg laughed at her spunk. "How does an AI relax? Turn her circuits way down low?"

"You laugh, but part of my programming includes what are called nerve dilation responses. I have a very real ability to become excited by certain stimuli. I'll show you when we get to your place." Grace grabbed her purse and they left hurriedly.

They walked the two blocks to his building, Greg sliding his hand down Grace's back until she swatted at it. Greg fumbled for his keys on the first floor garden apartment overlooking the lagoon in back. An egret squawked in the distance. "Nervous, Captain?"

"You're really something, aren't you? He pressed her up against the front door and tried to kiss her, but she turned away just as it opened. They tumbled in.

"I'd offer you a drink, but you don't seem to need one." Grace surveyed the room, hundreds of thousands of calculations running.

"This room definitely could use a woman's touch," Grace remarked, looking around at the piles of video games and empties.

"I could use a woman's touch. Come here." Greg roughly grabbed her arm and pulled her to him. "We do this my way here." He pinned her against the wall and tore at her blouse, her buttons clattering on the hardwood floor.

"Hey! Not so rough."

"Shut up. As if you had feelings. I could slap you and you wouldn't feel a thing." What Grace could feel was Greg grabbing a handful of her hair and snapping her head back, while his free hand clawed at her jeans.

He was technically correct about her inability to feel pain, per se, but she was programmed to have an emotional response to violence. By now Grace had run several million calculations. Grace looked into Greg's eyes with

something like wildness, as he lifted her and carried her into his bedroom, landing on his bed with furious energy.

Grace slapped at his face, as if to fight him off. She felt the lozenge under her tongue. This time Greg slapped her back, hard. He was fully out of control, wrestling Grace to the headboard. Grace repeated, "No....NO!" and then bit into the tablet.

Greg grabbed her face and turned it to him. He could see something in her eyes that was unfathomable. He'd take her now. He was entitled. He leaned in and kissed her roughly on her mouth. Grace slumped down, is if all the fight in her were gone, and returned his kiss, but with a tenderness that seemed out of place. The lozenge fully dissolved in Grace's mouth, its elixir was now mixing with Greg's saliva. His body jerked.

"There'll be no more kisses now. Listen to me. Try to relax. This will happen quickly and it will be painless. What you're feeling is a synthetic variant of Succhinylcholine, a natural neurotransmitter that affects the neuromuscular junction, causing temporary paralysis. You can hear my words perfectly clearly, but as you can now tell, you can't move a muscle.

"You're a bore, Greg, but that's beside the point. Had you been a perfect

* * * * *

gentleman today, you'd have met the same fate. Wasn't your fault. There's something much bigger at stake here."

Grace pulled the covers down, removed the last of Greg's clothes, leaving them neatly draped over his chair, and slid him into the bed, fluffing up the pillow. Greg's eyes stared straight ahead.

Grace scurried into the front room to get her purse and returned with what looked like a nicotine patch. "Be quick, but don't hurry," she muttered to herself. Leaning down, whispered into Greg's ear. "Now that you're incapacitated, I'm going to make your heart stop. This next drug is administered using a dissolvable patch. It will mimic a heart attack. The most likely cause? They'll be guessing a phantom heart murmur, I'm thinking. As you might have thought, it is completely undetectable. I probably have used a syringe, but why risk the puncture being discovered?" Grace tore open the package and placed the patch on Greg's bicep. "In ten minutes, the patch will have dissolved. In fifteen minutes, you will be dead. Oh, and one last thought: it's never nice to tell a lady to shut up."

Grace dressed, gathered her things, and quietly slipped out the front door.

The view from the spectator's platform was spectacular, Wishbone attached to three gleaming Kingstons - - the most powerful rocket thrusters on earth. From a distance, the ship indeed resembled a Thanksgiving wishbone, two wings curving to meet at the frontal deck. People had already started gathering, small tents dotting the sandy area around the viewing platform. A party atmosphere was already evident a good week before the fuel tanks had even been filled.

This launch had galvanized the entire world like nothing else, with nonstop media coverage. No part of the backstory of the mission had been left unexamined. Every participant and their families were fair game, all part of the hype leading up to launch day.

"14-day countdown for Wishbone? Why isn't it the usual 17-day count? Do we have target windows? Weather data? Where's the telemetry from Australia?" Controlled chaos they call it at Mission Control. "Zero four niner. Anomaly detected in the left fuel hinge." "Copy."

"Shut it down. Stop the count."

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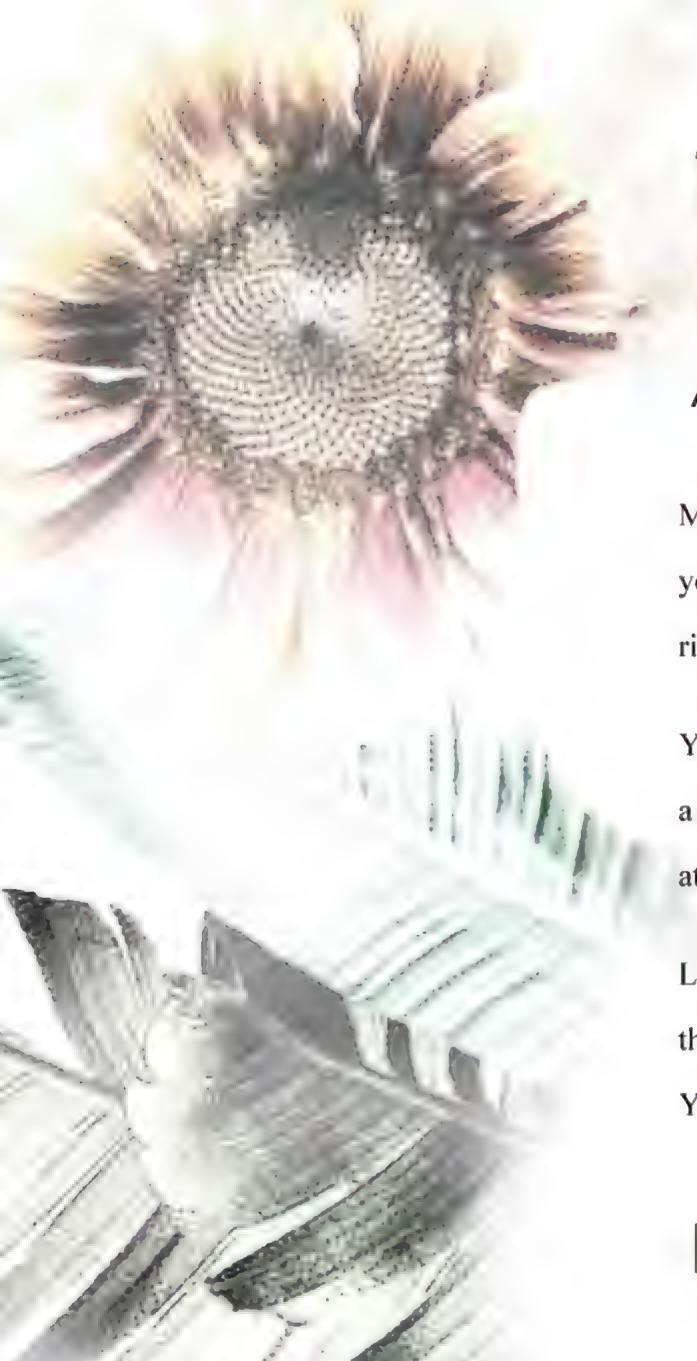
I came here for fog
but your bridges were not blurred, most afternoons,
with other wanderers over your brown
lagoons, confused, forgetting lies we'd created
and were now inadvertently believing.
Dante would decapitate us for our divisiveness.
We still want a Serene Republic, not a simulacrum,
not an oubliette, something almost drowning,
always bribing nomads who melt money into art.

II.

Behind that ancient naval yard
a young crow offers me a mustard seed
as if a parable were developing —
Do you remember that viscous brown that painters
created from ground mummies?
Imagine — some Greco-Egyptian expecting
to meet Osiris is now a Titian!
And here in Venice, that color was so loved
that fresh corpses had to be mummified.
Even afterlives can be forged.

III.

Your main plaza was flooded and at last your stolen lions woke up when, in my complicated ascent,
I sprouted from scattered fern pollen, a translucent army of germination on the wind. And what would you be, post-human?
What part of me could be thinking this poem while remembering half-conscious stains on a charcoal-gray satin glove, dropped in this aquamarine canal?
What could be greater than feeling sunrays expand from within my flushed seeds?



The Eye Lil Mounts To

After Odilon

Monster balloon of perfecti your spirit ascends from the rising through mist, intent of

Your heart recoils into a str a dusty crawl space behind attic strewn with leftover d

Lifted, until the fringed eye the mossy skull is all that re You will learn to love the e

By Julliann

ke a Strange Balloon ward Infinity

Redon

ibility and infinite progress

e dark swamp's dead matter

on the divine.

ange vacuum,

the chipped porch lattice,

ebris of memory.

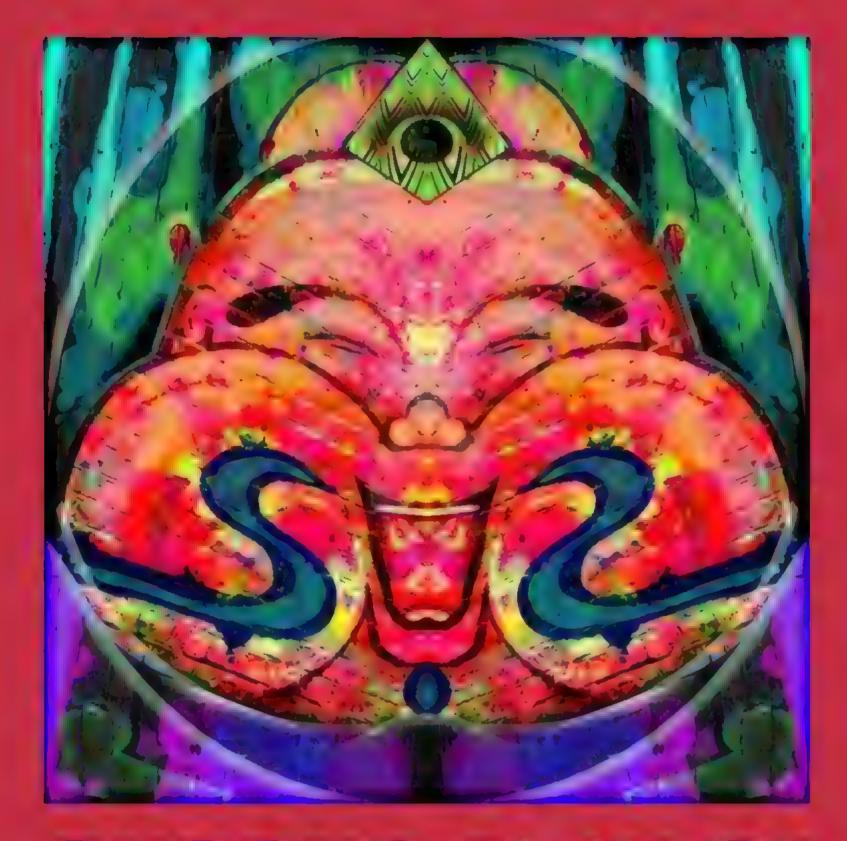
pierces the sacred canopy,

emains, hung on gossamer threads.

arth again.

a Juliesse





BUDDHA SMILES

by NeganzLucille

Buddha smiles

At sunrise

Buddha smiles

Before the day will have her way

Beauty in truth is overlooked

Off guard by the angler hooked

The artificial gleam of outcast lies

Beyond reach of what the truth will try

Constant and all around

But lies evolve from town to town

But Buddha smiles

Past sunrise

Buddha smiles

As for the lures and snares about his feet

entimental at the information attempts the other exercising of exercising

Silent flowers bloom from thorns

As a calmness in the storm

A timeline trapped on repeat

For actions that end in defeat

From life to life and game to game

The truth it seems always the same

Buddha smiles

At breakfast

Buddha smiles

As others scramble in recall of lies

A maze they built to confuse applies

By ease of thought the truth recalled

Without pause, heistalien or a moment statted

For used not on mistertune but opportunity

Thoughts without contortion by unity

So Buddha smiles

Uncomplicated

Buddha smiles

He never plays but observes their game

Making the simple hard is what brings them fame.

Yet the rules they follow are new the same

But ever changing to meet demand

Of smoke and mirrors or sleight of hand

Racing back varies against the flow of sand

Into a concrete past already tame

Once standing tall now hang in shame

But still rebuild your once good names

Or else the lesson fades in vain

As Buddha smiles

Walking in nature

Buddha smiles



Free from creation of tricks and deceit

With truth in nature below his feet

A place of beauty and reconcile

Where life is replenished

And nothing lays finished

The same every mile

Still nothing diminished

The same every trial

Words are replaced by a constant creek

Voices erased only truth left to seek

Decisions are faced

Stand tall for the meek

When all is retraced

No fortunes we keep

But memories embraced

Of those who fought for the weak

Buddha smiles

Full of hope Buddha smiles

His own faults his only detection
Improvement his only perfection
Time a willing companion
The truth without abandon
Even dormant below the canyon
Neither nature nor intervention
Can do more than show the way
Past obstacles of our own creation
Still we build a better day

At peace by the waters' reflection

It is easier to tame a nation

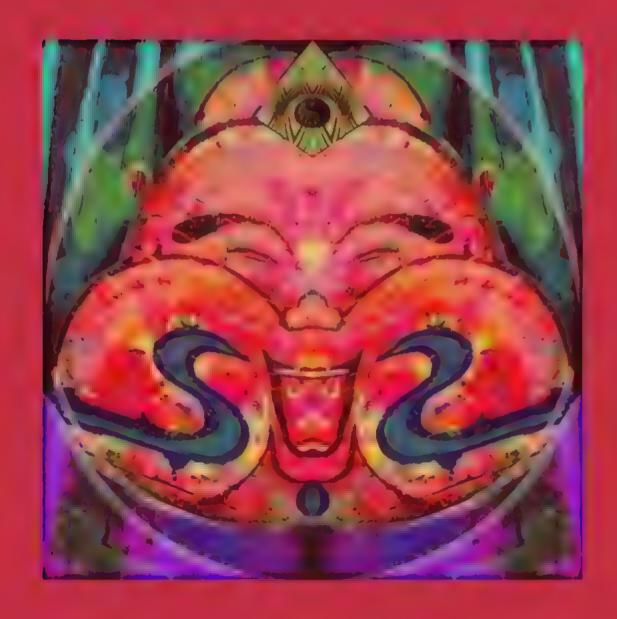
Than it is to control a tongue

A wild horse much easier to bridal



Than the wave that steers the young
It seems no more or less reliable
Our thoughts what we become
Where in nature there are many paths
In reflection there is only one

Buddha smiles
Reflecting
Buddha smiles





Spiro was late getting getting into the office,

which was unlike him. But it was not every day that Frank breezed through Washington and hosted one of his irresistible private parties. Who knew who would be there or what would happen?

There were some beautiful young women there, to be sure, and that was what the jackals in the press would concentrate on, if they got wind of it. But there were also congressmen, actors, lobbyists, artists, and television stars. Spiro wasn't one to get star struck, but for goodness sake, Columbo was there. And The Fonz!

Fran breezed into his office, after allowing him time to remove his jacket and put it on the coat tree, settle in his chair, and admire the clean, polished bare surface of his mahogany desk. He ran a tight ship, desk-wise. Everything seen to and disposed of by end-of-day. Or at least, put into an appropriate folder and tucked into a drawer.

"Golf," said Spiro, leaning back and putting his hands behind his head.

"Two-twelve," said Fran, flipping through the pages of his diary. "A foursome including Mr Sinatra, Mr Lebowitz, and Mr Spalding."



"Have a seat, dear," said Spiro. Fran eased in of the small leather chairs in front of his "What about this morning?"

"Well, you are clear until 9:45, the meeting/photo op with that Boy Scout troominutes set aside. Then, ironically, nothing 10:30, meeting in Haldeman's office, reattendance... then you speak over lunch Water Carrier convention: topic Freedom Press Ha Ha, and then... cocktails, golf, cocktails, then dinner...." She smiled believed Fran was too thin to be truly sexy, to be truly pretty, but she had a mischievour about her which, combined with her obedience, Spiro found immensely charming she was smart, usually.



"What about the Maryland mayors?" asked Spiro. "I thought that was today."

"Oh, drat," said Fran. "I forgot. That should have been half an hour ago."

"Call them now, and tell them I was called away by The President. Urgent, confidential consultation. Reschedule, tonight is ok, but tomorrow morning better....Now, Fran."

"Yes, sir."

"Send Felix in."

"Yes, sir."

Spiro went to the cabinet and got out the box that contained the chess board and all the pieces, beautiful black and white marble. He set it up on his desk.

Felix popped his head in the door. "Everything ok, Mr Vice President?"

"Of course, no security problems when you boys are around. Feel like getting whomped at chess? It is good training for you, you know, protecting the king and queen. I'll let you play white this time."

"White? Ok, Mr Vice President."

"Only until 9:30 though," said Spiro.

"Check," said Felix. He chuckled to himself. He made his moves almost as quickly as if it were blitz chess. It was the Vice President who mulled and stalled, humming, moving pieces around without taking his hand off them, before finally settling on where to set the piece. And then erupting in a fury if



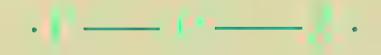
Felix promptly took his man.

"What happens if the pawn gets to the other end, again?" Spiro asked.

"They become another queen."

"See Felix? That's where hard work can take you. A pawn to a queen."

"Yes, Mr Vice President."





riday

Tonight's Theme:

with
DJ Gray
and Jami



ight

Howelsen 75, 234, 1545

8-10pm SLT



01:09:16 - [ENTITY TRANSFER MODULE]: Teleport

LOGIN FAILED (A True Story)

Art Blue

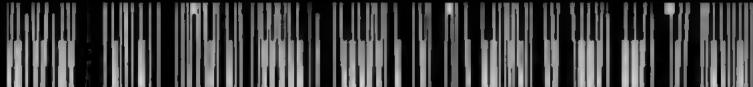
01:08:19 01:08:20 01:08:20 01:08:20 01:08:20 01:09:14 01:09:14 01:09:16 01:11:29 774ba2e24 01:18:05 01:18:05 01:18:05 01:18:05 c1d57a19e7 01:18:05

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for Art Linden to <120, 119, 49> within GOD9000

Login failed.

We are unable to complete your request at this time. Please contact Second Life support for assistance at http://support.secondlife.com.



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[UPLOAD BAKED TEXTURE HANDLER]: Received baked texture 0c299223-bd61-419d-ac04-77c7f58837af
[UPLOAD BAKED TEXTURE HANDLER]: Received baked texture 6dd94e1a-0d09-4564-a091-586cec3c3f0b
[UPLOAD BAKED TEXTURE HANDLER]: Received baked texture deab8490-93dc-47a9-9e3b-54e674cdab26
[AVFACTORY]: Received texture update for Art Linden 12109a50-39bf-4ac3-9df9-3c1d57a19e71
[LAND MANAGEMENT MODULE]: Got parcelinfo request for regionHandle 1099511628032000; x/y 120/119
[LAND MANAGEMENT MODULE]: got parcelinfo for parcel Empty Region in region 1099511628032000; sending.
[ENTITY TRANSFER MODULE]: Teleport for Art Linden to <120, 119, 49> within G009000
[FRIENDS]: 12109a50-39bf-4ac3-9df9-3c1d57a19e71 (ArtLinden) offered friendship to 7be1820a-652d-4407-bb93-37d
(Art Black)
[CLIENT]: Got a logout request for Art Linden in G009000
[CLIENT]: Close has been called for Art Linden attached to scene G009000
[GLIENT]: LogoutAgent: session 7f200d04-713b-42fd-a868-82b8b05e0b8e, user 12109a50-39bf-4ac3-9df9-3
[JobEngine]: Stopping AsyncInUDP-12109a50-39bf-4ac3-9df9-3c1d57a19e71
[SCENE]: Removing root agent Art Linden 12109a50-39bf-4ac3-9df9-3c1d57a19e71 in region G009000
[CLIENT]: The avatar has left the building
```

[UPLOAD BAKED YEXTURE MANDLER]: Received baked texture 728910dd-6a22-40d6-b95a-er9d65e9cbda
[UPLOAD BAKED TEXTURE HANDLER]: Received baked texture de5566a1-d27b-4828-9dac-45cb5a36270a

18:05 - [Scene]: The avatar has left the buildi ion (GOD9000) #

- [Scene]: The avatar has left the building (009000) #

LIENT]: Got a logout request for Art Linden in GOD9000 | LIENT]: Close has been called for Art Linden attached to scene GOD9000 RID USER SERVICE]: User 12109a50-39bf-4ac3-9df9-3c1d57a19e71 is offlir Gregorovich. Everyone has. He created the Lindens. All of them. I am a Linden, Art Linden. Do you want to be a Linden? A Linden for a day? You may ask, "Can I take any name?" My answer might be no. I could say yes but then I would have to commit suicide if you take Art. I would do the sacrifice for you if I would know you. Then I would give you my UUID and you are me. You would be Art Linden. Then you can do all the things a Linden may do.

There are rumours that they log in during your sleep and when you wake up, all you notice is that you are logging in on Linden land. No Lindens are gone, no inventory items, no calling card was eaten, no changes at all. You feel a déjà vu and this makes it hard to deal with. "What the heck goes on in my life?" After thinking for awhile, you ask Art Blue. Not that he knows more than others, but you want to avoid others calling you insane, and by asking Art, it is like you just joined the club. All he says to you is, "You are not so important for them.

If your currency amount is the same, so no Lindens have been taken from your balance, then forget about it," and then he adds with a low voice, "Please do me a favour - - don't open a ticket." You ask, "Why?" He says, "I can't say. All I say is that it is for your own

good, so just don't open one."

Now you are even more confused and you call Gregorovich. "I want to leave this world," you say and Gregorovich shows you a nearly 50 year-old picture from Welt am Draht [World on a Wire] where an avatar was taken from the world with no trace.

Then Gregorovich plays a song, a song you've already heard before. The tunes crawl like a hypersonic wave into your mind. You decode the words on the picture of the newspaper Gregorovich showed you. It states "Mensch spurlos verschwunden" and the translator tells you person gone without a trace. At this time, in the year 1973, terms like logoff or login did not exist; life did not exist. When asking Art, he showed you a black screen with a white message. You read "Login failed," when you shared your concerns and he mumbled, "The avatar has left the building." You play the song on a loop. First, you hated the song, it pulls you down, but then, over time, it became your favourite song when you want to leave this world behind. It is the world where all your friends live inside. That is the reason you love your computer. The song is the song of the Mask.

https://youtu.be/FD0Wxz4giVU

But wait. You don't really want to leave this world. What you want is to

take your friends with you, so you go back to Art. You say, "Art, can you copy my friends when I log off, like a Linden can? I don't want to get them hurt, so please do it during their dreams." Art smiles and says, "You want to be a Linden for a day, right?"

Your CareMo makes your cheeks turn red. "Darn," you forgot to deactivate the Catwa Real Emote. No way to deny now. Art says, "There is a world you can be a Linden and all your friends will be inside." Your heart jumps for a moment in joy, but then you feel that this would be not right. That's why you talk to Art. You say, "Maybe it is not such a good idea to know all and everything about my friends. What if one finds out that I am a Linden?"

Art says, "You are not the only one and not the first either." You gasp, but long, you nod. for also not Gregorovich replays the song and Art adds, "Everyone can be God, everyone in this world is a Linden." You feel there must be more and you stumble, "It must be a wonder world, a world full of art and wonders." Art says, "You are right, there will be a story, maybe even a novel on it, titled GOD 9000, but you have to wait until May 2022, then this world will open.

He hands you over an invitation card. He says, "Everyone will be a Linden. First come, first named, chose your name early." And before Art is leaving the building and the simulator prompts his leave, he turns to face you and makes a thumbs up, "I see you Linden." You look at the card you hold in hand. There it is stated what to do. Send your name wish to request@linden.icu

When you read the disclaimer on the card you smile. It is the one that is in the *Gods of Informatics*, a stolen one.

"Nobody in this story, and no outfit or corporation, thank God, is based upon an actual person or outfit in the real world. But I can tell you this; as my journey through the digital jungle progressed, I came to realize that, by comparison with the reality, my story was as tame as a holiday postcard."

You don't care that words have been taken from John le Carré, the master spy at Semper Occultus. You are a user and you are a regular reader of *rez Magazine*, so you know the tricks. "The artists may stay mortal. All art is mortal" is your reply. "I will be a Linden." The card understands, creates your account, and then goes transparent.

You speak it out loud, "Linden, I C U."

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Token Economy by Julia Hatch

It's a token economy

An economy of acceptance.

It's for the allocation of what is acceptable in the trade in people's lives.

I'll trade one black man for one white lesbian

One Black woman buys you a high 5 and singing the blues

One gay man will get you stylish clothes and interior design.

an Indian guru gives you a shot at Nirvana

A native American gives you a dream catcher and repackaged mysticism

just don't let them off the reservation

but the trans woman buys you a punch line with a laugh out loud and something to punch and hunt for sport.

The trans man blends in and trades it all for male privilege.

Gender queer, gender fluid are the wild cards



until you need to pee in public facilities

but a cis gendered white male is a get out of jail free card and a guaranteed roll to Park Place, just pay the rent and don't tell him he's privileged, he's earned it all, if you don't believe it then ask him and he'll tell you about his trickle-down fantasies and all his token economy friends.

He's not shy about cashing them in for acceptability because

Some of his best friends are black and brown and those disabled people he helped through the United Way in the old days it was Jerry Lewis and his kids in wheel chairs. Now that brought tears to his eyes

but he's only degrees of freedom away from tiki torches in Charlottesville and cashing in tokens for assault rifles on the steps of state capitals;

he won't wear mask and he won't listen to reason

because it's all a token economy; pre-fab construction; all for him; a make-believe free market of someone else's design. A spinoff from Madison Avenue ad campaigns to support our troops and respect the flag, even the one with a swastika. It's all patterns on fabric anyway, just add meaning, shake well and run with it. It's the focal point for everything wrong in the world

just don't pop the bubble or it'll ruin our suspension of disbelief in the American dream.

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